

A. Claims 33, 41 and 42

Claims 33, 41 and 42 recite a second sheet feeder detachably attached to an upstream edge of a tray section.

The Examiner acknowledges that Ikeda fails to disclose the above feature, but contends that “Kuwai” does (pg. 4 of Office Action). However, as set forth above, the rejection of claims 33, 41 and 42, are in view of Ikeda and “Hinson.” The Kuwai reference is not cited by the Examiner on the Notice of References cited and therefore, the Applicant is unable to properly respond to the Office Action.

Further, even if Applicant assumes *arguendo* that the Examiner inadvertently referred to Kuwai instead of Hinson on page 4 of the Office Action, the rejection is still improper. For example, on page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner maintains that element 8 of Figure 1 discloses the claimed second sheet feeder. Applicant has viewed Figure 1 of Hinson and notes that there is no element 8 therein. Rather, element 8 is shown in Figure 9 of Hinson, but such feature is directed towards a sheet input slot. Applicant submits that such slot does not teach or suggest the claimed second sheet feeder.

In view of the errors in the current Office Action and since it is unclear as to which reference the Examiner intended to cite therein, Applicant has not been afforded an opportunity to properly respond to the Office Action. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to issue a revised non-final Office Action that clearly sets forth the references and rejections.

B. Claims 34 and 37-39

Applicant submits that claims 34 and 37-39 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency upon claim 33.

II. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Ikeda, Hinson and JP 408133556 to Ono (“Ono”).

The Examiner has rejected claim 35 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Ikeda, Hinson and Ono. However, since claim 35 is dependent upon claim 33, and Ono fails to cure the deficient teachings of Ikeda and Hinson, in regard to claim 33, Applicant submits that such claim is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency.

III. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Ikeda, Hinson and JP 11321016 to Edatsune (“Edatsune”)

The Examiner has rejected claim 40 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Ikeda, Hinson and Edatsune. However, since claim 40 is dependent upon claim 33, and Edatsune fails to cure the deficient teachings of Ikeda and Hinson in regard to claim 33, Applicant submits that such claim is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency.

Response under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No. 10/750,963

IV. Allowable Subject Matter

As set forth above, the Examiner has indicated that claim 36 is allowed.

V. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: September 12, 2006